

# RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

## ENERGY REGULATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week I hosted a tele-townhall with people from across western Kentucky, from places such as Lyon County and Webster County. These constituents shared their thoughts on a range of issues, from ObamaCare to taxes, but one issue kept coming up over and over again. The Kentuckians I spoke with were truly worried about the Obama administration's war on coal jobs. They have seen the devastation in eastern Kentucky, and they know what the President's newest regulations will likely mean for middle-class families such as theirs: skyrocketing utility bills, higher prices, fewer jobs. They know the administration's war is an elitist crusade that threatens to shift good, well-paying jobs overseas, splinter our manufacturing base, and throw yet another load onto the backs of middle-class Kentuckians who have already struggled so much.

The hard-working people I represent are worried enough just about making their mortgage payments and paying for car repairs and coping with energy bills and summer vacations. These are the people whom President Obama and his Washington Democratic allies should be listening to—not to liberal elites who have been begging the President to go after the coal industry and the people whose livelihoods depend on it. But President Obama does not seem terribly interested in those folks or their problems. Once again he will be off campaigning this week. He will huddle with more leftwing ideologues—the folks who love to make a buck off of coal and then attack coal families with ego-driven political crusades, such as the ideology the President rolled out the red carpet for just a few weeks ago down at the White House.

Meanwhile, here in the Senate the Democratic majority will continue to block and tackle for the President and his anticoal offensive. Senate Democrats block basically every attempt—every attempt, however small—to inject congressional oversight into the administration's energy regulations. They shut down votes. They obstruct the committee process that should be at the heart of our work. They even gag their own Members.

They blocked commonsense legislation such as the Coal Country Protection Act. What that bill—my bill—would do is require the administration to certify that jobs will not be lost and utility rates will not go up as a result of the President's energy regulations. That is not too much to ask. But Washington Democrats are blocking my bill because they know the President's reg-

ulations will cost jobs and will raise utility rates, and they are more interested in protecting the President's ideological agenda than jobs.

In other words, Senate Democrats block and tackle and obstruct—all to defend the President's war on coal jobs. It is a clear case of extreme devotion, and it makes sense because the Democratic majority really only has one mission these days: Protect the President and the left at all costs. That is why the average Democratic Senator has almost no power anymore. Our friends on the other side of the aisle do not ever get to do anything. They are just another backbencher fortifying President Obama's Senate moat—the place where good ideas go to die. It is a shame.

The Senate used to be a place where big ideas were debated and serious solutions were explored. Committees operated and amendments were offered. I remember a time not too long ago when there was even such a thing as an independent-minded Senate Democrat. But today's Democratic leadership has put an end to all of that.

It is about time our Washington Democratic friends open their eyes to the true cost of the President's policies, both in my State and in theirs.

It is time for these Washington Democrats to stop pretending they are not complicit in the administration's war on coal jobs or in the harm it is causing to our constituents because there is real pain out there. Beyond the Democratic echo chamber, there is real pain out there, out in the real world, in places such as Pike County.

Washington Democrats need to understand that Kentuckians are more than just some statistic on the bureaucratic balance sheet. These are real Americans who are hurting, and they deserve to have their voices heard. One way to do that, as I have suggested, is for the administration to hold some listening sessions on its new energy regulations in the areas that stand to suffer the most from them, in places such as eastern and western Kentucky. I have already issued multiple invitations for the President's people to visit places in my home State. I am issuing one again today.

The sad truth is that officials in Washington do not want to come anywhere near coal country. They just want to impose their regulations, hear some "feedback" from the echo chamber in order to check a box, and then move right along to the next front in their war on coal. They do not even want to talk to the very people they intend to put out of work. Well, several tele-townhall participants want to know why the President will not come down to see the mines and the coal families themselves. I am wondering too.

Mr. President, the campaign trips can wait. You recently expressed an interest in hanging around middle-class Americans for a change. What I am saying is, here is a perfect chance.

Come on down to Kentucky and talk to some coal miners.

## HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST KEVIN J. GRAHAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life of one soldier from Kentucky who gave his life in service to our country. SPC Kevin J. Graham of Benton, KY, was killed in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on September 26, 2009, when the enemy attacked his vehicle with an IED. He was 27 years old.

For his service in uniform, Specialist Graham received many medals, awards, and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal, the Expert Marksmanship Badge, the National Defense Service Medal, and the Army Service Ribbon.

Soldiering was not simply a vocation to Specialist Graham; it was a way of life and it was a calling. From a young age, friends and family recall his strong desire to become a soldier.

"Before he went into the Army, he would see guys in uniform and say he needed to be doing something like that," says the Reverend Jonathan Goodman, Kevin's pastor from Benton's Calvary Baptist Church. "He felt like it was his life's work, and he was honored to serve his country."

Kevin was born in 1982 in Illinois and raised in Wisconsin. He moved with his parents to Marshall County, KY, about 5 years before his death. As a child Kevin received his education through Christian Liberty Academy as a homeschooler. He was a member of Paddock Lake Baptist Church in Wisconsin, where he was involved with the youth group and assisted the youth pastor.

As a young boy Kevin and his best friend used to dress up in Army fatigues and patrol the neighborhood. Neighbors would say they felt safe because they knew someone was watching out for them. Kevin's interest in the military also included a love of military history. He would read endlessly about the Civil War and World War II and talk often with his father, grandfather, and others who had served about their experiences. Kevin collected memorabilia from different conflicts, including some given to him by veterans. His interest in military aviation led him to spend his summers at an airfield in Kenosha, WI, to see hundreds of World War II planes gather in formation.

Kevin also learned to shoot at an early age. By the time he was 16, he had earned a job overseeing the skeet range at the local shooting facility. He